

# BALTIMORE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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## ANNUAL REPORT





# CHIEF JOANNE R. RUND



I am pleased to present the Baltimore County Fire Department's Annual Report for 2020. I encourage you to reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of the last year.

The COVID-19 pandemic made this a year of historic, once-in-a-generation challenges. Overnight (it seems) we adapted every aspect of emergency response and day-to-day Department life to protect our personnel and the people we serve from the virus.

Despite the pandemic, we made progress in so many areas -- fire ground safety, apparatus replacement and technology, to name a few.

I am honored to be your Chief and look forward to working with you in 2021.



# AT A GLANCE

The Baltimore County Fire Department (BCoFD) is an all-hazards, professional agency serving the largest and most geographically and demographically diverse jurisdiction in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

BCoFD, together with 29 volunteer companies organized under the Baltimore County Volunteer Firefighter's Association, provides fire suppression, EMS and rescue services to nearly 850,000 residents and visitors. BCoFD also provides mutual aid to neighboring jurisdictions.

Ours is one of the **largest** combined (career/volunteer) fire services in the U.S.

- Annual budget  
**\$113 million**
- Population  
**847,000**
- Calls for service  
**142,000**
- Service area  
**682 square miles**
- Career stations  
**25**
- Career personnel  
**1,000**
- Volunteer stations  
**29**



# 72%

of all calls handled in Baltimore County are calls for emergency medical service.



# SERVICE AREA

Baltimore County is the largest suburban jurisdiction in the metropolitan Baltimore region and the third-largest county in Maryland, comprising 682 square miles.

It surrounds the City of Baltimore -- a separate geopolitical jurisdiction -- on three sides. Baltimore County borders Carroll and Howard counties to the west, Harford County to the east, and Pennsylvania's Adams and York counties to the north. Its eastern and southeastern regions border the Patapsco River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Much of Baltimore County is suburban. The upper two-thirds of the County is primarily rural, with numerous horse and dairy farms.

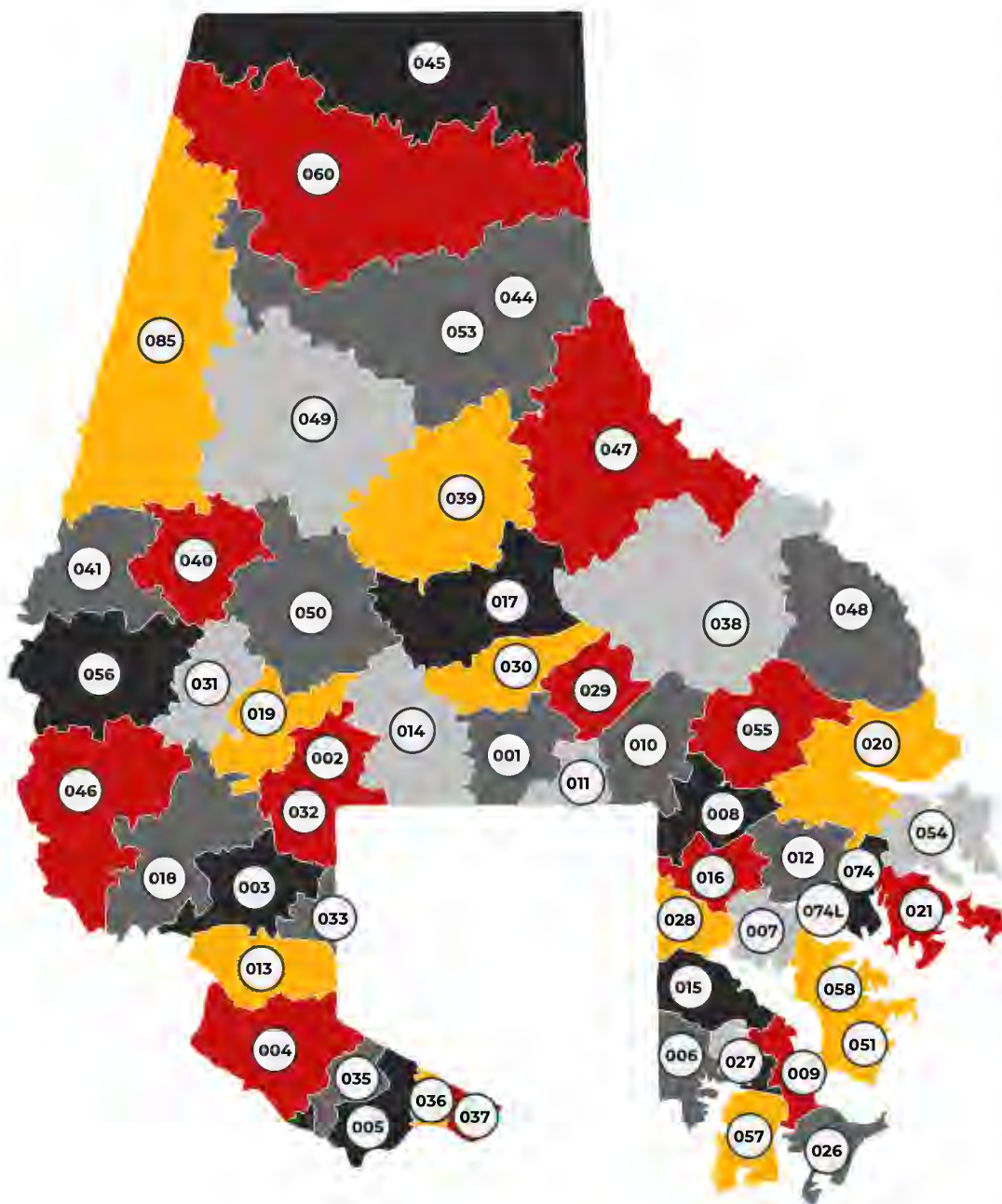


## Major Communities

- Towson
- Lutherville-Timonium
- Cockeysville
- Owings Mills
- Reisterstown
- Pikesville
- Randallstown
- Woodlawn
- Hereford
- White Marsh
- Perry Hall
- Parkville
- Essex
- Dundalk
- Sparrows Point

# SERVICE AREA

Twenty-five career and 29 volunteer stations provide fire, rescue and emergency medical service to Baltimore County. BCoFD is one of the largest combined fire services in the U.S.



1	Towson
2	Pikesville
3	Woodlawn
4	Catonsville
5	Halethorpe
6	Dundalk
7	Essex
8	Fullerton
9	Edgemere
10	Parkville
11	Hillendale
12	Middle River
13	Westview
14	Brooklandville
15	Eastview
16	Golden Ring
17	Texas
18	Randallstown
19	Garrison
20	White Marsh VFC
21	Bowleys Quarters VFD
26	North Point/ Edgemere VFD
27	Wise Avenue VFC
28	Rosedale VFC
29	Providence VFC
30	Lutherville VFC
31	Owings Mills VFC
32	Pikesville VFC
33	Woodlawn VFC
35	Arbutus VFD
36	Lansdowne VFD
37	English Consul VFD
38	Long Green VFC
39	Cockeysville VFC
40	Glyndon VFD
41	Reisterstown VFC
44	Hereford VFC
45	Maryland Line VFC
46	Liberty Road VFC
47	Jacksonville VFC
48	Kingsville VFC
49	Butler VFC
50	Chesnut Ridge VFC
51	Essex VFD
53	Hereford Vol. AMBO
54	Chase
55	Perry Hall
56	Franklin
57	Sparrows Point
58	Back River Neck
60	Parkton
74	Middle River VFRC

# PERSONNEL

- Fire Chief (1)  
**Joanne R. Rund**
- Assistant Chief (2)  
**Paul S. Lurz, Operations**  
**Jennifer L. Aubert Utz, Support Services**
- Division Chief (4)  
**Kenneth P. Hughes**  
**Francis X. DiPaula**  
**Thomas G. Ramey**  
**Wayne L. Tome Sr. (retired 12/2020)**
- Battalion Chief (8)  
**David J. Bycoffe**  
**Charles H. Tudor**  
**Robert B. Kemp**  
**Blaine A. Kurrle**  
**Lawrence W. Majchrzak (retired 9/2020)**  
**Edmund G. Schwartz Jr.**  
**Timothy A. Lowman**  
**Lonnie D. Ledford**
- Fire Director (6)  
**Richard M. Schenning, EMS**  
**Marcus D. Johnson, Fire Marshal**  
**Julia M. Dillard, Health & Safety**  
**Craig A. Bidinger, Supply**  
**Timothy B. Rostkowski,**  
**Fire-Rescue Academy**  
**Christian D. Griffin, Staffing**
- Emergency Management Director (1)  
**Jay Ringgold (Ret. 9/2020)**
- Executive Officer (1)  
**Ray Norris**
- Financial Officer (1)  
**Charnetta M. Holman**
- Public Affairs Director (1)  
**Elise E. Armacost**
- Volunteer Administrator (1)  
**Andrew O. Smith**
- Other Civilian Staff (26)
- Fire Captain (96)
- EMS Captain (6)
- Fire Lieutenant (104)
- EMS Lieutenant (27)
- Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator (161)
- Fire Specialist (141)
- Paramedic (108)
- PM/FF (47)
- EMT/FF (162)
- EMT (76)
- Firefighter (58)
- Probationary EMT (20)

\*\*\* Data effective 12/31/2020





# EQUIPMENT

- **Engines**  
28 career; 43 volunteer
- **Trucks**  
6 career; 4 volunteer
- **Medics**  
35 career; 22 volunteer
- **Tower ladders**  
1 career; 1 volunteer
- **Heavy rescue squads**  
9 volunteer
- **Urban Search & Rescue**  
1 career
- **Decontamination Unit**  
1 career
- **Hazmat**  
4 career
- **All-terrain vehicles**  
1 career; 8 volunteer
- **Bariatric Medics**  
1 career
- **Brush Units**  
24 career; 16 volunteer
- **Utility**  
37 volunteer
- **Special Units**  
16 volunteer
- **Tanker Units**  
3 volunteer
- **Boats**  
9 volunteer
- **Marine Emergency Team**  
2 volunteer
- **Dive Unit**  
1 volunteer
- **Air Units**  
3 career
- **Rehab Units**  
2 volunteer





# CALLS FOR SERVICE

- Emergency Medical Services  
**96,723**

- Structure Fires  
**710**

- All Fires  
**1,990**

- Rescues (Non-vehicular)  
**288**

- Vehicle Accident w/o Extrication  
**6,595**

- Vehicle Extrication  
**94**

- Hazardous Materials  
**3,971**

- False Alarm/Good Intent  
**16,131**



**134,442**

Total calls for service





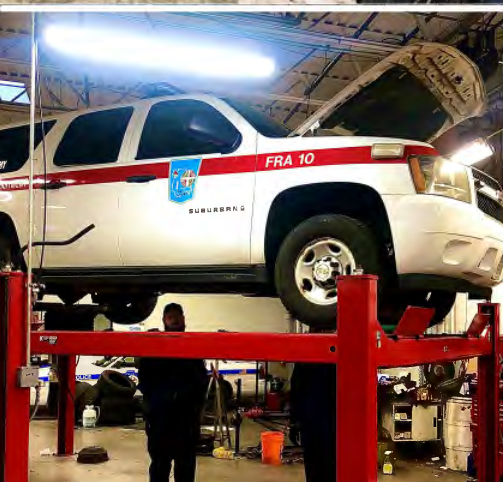
# LIVING TO SERVE



Photos by Michael Schwartzberg/FirePix1075.zenfolio.com



# LIVING TO SERVE





# IN THE COMMUNITY

BCoFD values its strong, mutually supportive relationship with its communities. We believe an informed constituency that works in partnership with us is the most crucial fire and injury prevention asset.

BCoFD prevention efforts center on enforcement of state and local fire codes and education regarding smoke and carbon monoxide alarms -- especially in at-risk neighborhoods.

We participate in a number of community-oriented activities including National Night Out, the Fire Prevention Week Poster Contest, "Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters" and memorial services for our fallen members.

- Public Education Drive-by Programs

**10**

- Smoke & CO Alarms Distributed \*\*

**64**

- Fire Inspections

**14,715**

- Social Distancing Task Force Checks

**16,408**

\*\*The federal grant supporting the Smoke & CO Alarm Education Program expired in 2020 and will be renewed in 2021.

National Night Out, October 5, 2020  
Catonsville Fire Station





# IN THE COMMUNITY





# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## COVID-19

The novel coronavirus pandemic is the defining event of 2020.

In March, as COVID-19 began to spread around Maryland and the world, BCoFD began a rapid response to an unprecedented crisis that affected every aspect of agency operations.

A COVID-19 "command center" was established on the 4th floor to coordinate all pandemic-related activities and issue daily situation reports.

The Department quickly transitioned to remote work arrangements for most civilian and some sworn employees.

Protective policies -- masks, social distancing, hygiene -- were developed and put in place.

EMS established a Screening Unit to conduct contact tracing when members test positive; and a Members Assistance Unit to provide support and resources to our employees.

At the direction of the County Executive, the Fire Marshal's Office established a "Social Distancing Task Force" dedicated to ensuring local businesses follow COVID-related regulations.

As the year came to a close and Maryland experienced another surge in the virus, the Department developed a plan to vaccinate first responders. In December, BCoFD administered its first doses to EMS personnel.

COVID-19 will continue to be a factor well into 2021, BCoFD appreciates the efforts of every single member in helping us cope with this historic challenge and to ensure seamless provision of service to our residents and visitors.



# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## Apparatus

In 2020 BCoFD, with the support of the John A. Olszewski Administration, invested \$27.275 million in emergency apparatus.

These enhancements focused on safety, health and wellness. Compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards was an essential aspect of the specifications. Apparatus was designed with specific safety features in mind.

Larger apparatus feature a new black-over-red design.

The purchases include:

- 1 All-terrain vehicle (\$25,000)
- 1 Mid-mount tower (\$1.5 million)
- 3 Tractor-drawn aerials (\$1.5 million each; \$4.5 million total)
- 9 EMS supervisor vehicles (\$60,000 each; \$540,000 total)
- 16 Pumpers (\$735,000 each; \$11.76 million total)
- 22 Medic Units (bariatric capable); (\$365,000 each; \$8 million total)
- 23 Chief Officer/Staff Response vehicles (\$40,000 each; \$920,000 total)





# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## EMS Enhancements

With calls for emergency medical service comprising more than 70 percent of all BCoFD calls, the EMS section is one of the Department's busiest.

Accomplishments in 2020 include:

- A leading role in all aspects of COVID-19 response, screening, testing and employee support.
- Development of an Integrated Community Assessment Referral and Evaluation program that allows EMS clinicians securely to identify and refer people at risk of psychological, social and financial issues to local non-emergency resources.
- Assisted local Health officials in administering the "Overdose to Action" grant. An EMS lieutenant oversees overdose prevention and a database for all related public safety agencies.
- Preparation for placement of LUCAS CPR devices on every transport unit in 2021.
- Preparation for placement of King Vision Video laryngoscopes on all ALS transport units in 2021.
- Coordination with local Aging and Housing & Community Services officials on a long-term initiative to provide additional services to the County's homeless population.



# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## New Air Units

In October, BCoFD placed in service three state-of-the-art air units worth more than \$1.5 million. The units are assigned to Hillendale, Sparrows Point and Garrison stations.

Capabilities include improved scene lighting, ability to compress air at the scene and ability to charge portable batteries and SCBA batteries at large-scale incidents.

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## 115th Recruit Class

Graduation exercises for the 115th Recruit Class were held July 23.

The class comprised 26 Probationary Firefighters.

This group is the first to go through the Fire-Rescue Academy during the pandemic using a hybrid learning system.

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## Fire Prevention Grant

BCoFD received a \$410,000 federal Fire Prevention and Safety grant for fire prevention efforts targeted to residents at high risk of injury from fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

The grant allows BCoFD to continue its Smoke & CO Alarm Education Program, including the purchase of 15,000 smoke and CO alarms over the next two years.





# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## Bluetooth Capability

B CoFD activated new technology that connects our fleet of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and portable radios with a Bluetooth platform. This significantly improves communication with the Incident Commander for firefighters operating on scenes where ambient noise and physical barriers such as water are a problem.

B CoFD is one of the first major metropolitan fire departments to use this technology.



## Safety Officer Training

In the fall, the FRA and Safety divisions hosted 13 students for an Incident Safety Officer course and 12 students for a Health and Safety Officer course. The MFRI-credit courses were adapted to include material specific for B CoFD operations and processes.

The addition of trained safety officers significantly enhances our on-scene safety capabilities.



## Safety "Stand Down"

2020 marked the second year B CoFD participated in the National Fire Fighter Safety Stand Down Program (June 14-20, 2020), designed to reduce preventable injuries and deaths in Fire and EMS. This Stand Down focused on responder safety at roadway incidents and best practices in traffic incident management.

We're proud that B CoFD was featured by the Stand Down as a "Success Story."



# VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE

Twenty nine volunteer fire companies nonprofit agencies organized under the Baltimore County Volunteer Firefighter's Association work in tandem with BCoFD to provide emergency fire, rescue and emergency medical services. The volunteers provide a variety of specialized units including heavy rescue, swiftwater teams, marine rescue, dive team and rehab.

Baltimore County provides significant financial support to the volunteers, including grants, equipment, incentives to companies providing EMS and subsidies for fuel and utilities.

In FY2021 the County contributed \$10.1 million to volunteer companies.

In September 2020 Thomas Ludwig, Wise Avenue VFC, was elected President of the BCVFA. Chuck Bollinger, Hereford VFC, is Senior Vice President.

- Support from Baltimore County  
**\$10.1 million**
- Volunteer members  
**2,500-3,000**
- Companies providing EMS  
**21**
- Heavy rescue squads  
**9**
- Truck companies  
**5**





# VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE



Photos by Michael Schwartzberg/FirePix1075.zenfolio.com



# IN MEMORIAM

## Ret. Chief Elwood H. Banister



Ret. Fire Chief Elwood H. Banister -- one of the Department's most important figures -- passed away November 24 at the University of Maryland St. Joseph Hospital Center in Towson. He was 86.

Chief Banister remained a powerful force and visible presence in the Baltimore County Fire Service throughout his retirement. We owe many of our traditions to him.

Chief Banister joined BCoFD in 1956 and rose through the ranks until 1991, when he was appointed Chief. He retired in 1994.

During his career, he was a leader at the state and national levels and fluent and skilled in virtually every aspect of the profession.

In retirement, he established the annual Baltimore County Fire Service memorial service, the BCoFD Honor Guard and other traditions that continue to this day. He has been our most conscientious custodian of Fire Service history and tradition.

He was a life member of the Cockeysville Volunteer Fire Co.



# LOOKING AHEAD

## Third-Party Analysis

A comprehensive third-party review and analysis of the Department is scheduled for completion in 2021.

The review will examine every aspect of departmental operations with the goal of identifying strengths and weaknesses, how we compare to similar agencies and a plan for achieving necessary change.

This review has been one of Chief Rund's goals since her appointment in 2019;

## Emergency Management

Recognizing the importance of a coordinated, multi-agency response to community emergencies, BCoFD and the Olszewski administration plan to strengthen the Emergency Management section.

The County will hire a new Emergency Planner and administrative support in 2021. The planner will focus on securing and administering grants, public education and outreach and assistance with emergency plans and procedures.

Appointment of a new Emergency Management Director (to replace Jay L. Ringgold, who retired in 2020, is pending.

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## Apparatus

BCoFD is scheduled to make a major investment in apparatus replacement in 2021.

New trucks and engines will come with a bold new look, as shown below.

New units will include:

- 6 1,000-gallon engines; \$4.4 million total
- 10 750-gallon engines; \$7.3 million total
- 3 ladder trucks; \$4.6 million total
- 1 foam unit; \$755,000

Total investment: \$17 million

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## Reorganization

Chief Rund initiated in 2020 a comprehensive departmental reorganization designed to better delegate human resources and address weaknesses.

The reorganization, scheduled for implementation in 2021, will:

- Enhance diversity in certain ranks
- Improve transparency
- Enhance safety on the incident scene
- Enhance EMS capabilities







@BaltCoFire



Baltimore County Fire Department



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